

Tempers Heat Up At Trial in Italy On Antiquities

By ELISABETTA POVOLEDO

ROME, Dec. 16 — Tempers became heated today as the Italian state presented new evidence in its case against Marion True, a former antiquities curator at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, who is on trial here on charges of dealing in looted antiquities.

Ms. True's defense lawyers shouted out objections when Maurizio Pellegrini, a document and photography analyst with the Italian Culture Ministry who testified as an expert witness for the state, began commenting on correspondence between Ms. True and the antiquities dealer Giacomo Medici, a co-defendant in the case who was sentenced to 10 years in prison last December. He is appealing that decision.

Judge Gustavo Barbalinardo repeatedly called the court to order as the defense team objected that Mr. Pellegrini was "just parroting the prosecutor's conclusions," as Francesco Isolabella, a lawyer for Ms. True, put it.

Neither Ms. True nor her co-defendant, the American dealer Robert Hecht, was in the courtroom today.

In one letter cited by Mr. Pellegrini, Ms. True thanks Mr. Medici for donating the head of a kouros (a statue representing youth) to the Getty, and for providing information on the provenance of three fragmentary proto-Corinthian olpai, or pitchers, in the museum's collection. Ms. True wrote that it was "helpful" to know that the pieces "came from Cerveteri and the area of Monte Abatone," an area in central Italy rich in archaeological sites. "The fact that Medici was able to be so specific about the provenance of the pieces means he's been in contact with the robbers who raided the tomb," the prosecutor, Paolo Ferri, said. "And it shows that True knows of these contacts."

The charged atmosphere reflects the high profile of the trial, which is being closely watched by museums around the world. It is the first time that Italy has charged a museum official with involvement in the trade of looted objects. Italian officials hope the trial will discourage museums and collectors from buying art that appears on the market without a clear provenance.

In the 10 years Italian investigators have worked on this case, they have identified 42 objects currently or at one time in the Getty's possession that they believe were looted from Italian soil. Two of these, a fifth-century B.C. bronze Etruscan candelabrum and tripod, were shown during the prosecution's PowerPoint presentation in court today, accompanied by letters from Ms. True to Mr. Medici discussing their acquisition.

The Getty returned the tripod to Italy in 1999, and last month it returned the candelabrum.



Hiroaki Ito for The New York Times

Don Vappie on banjo, Wycliffe Gordon on trombone, Herlin Riley on drums, Wynton Marsalis on trumpet and Wessell Anderson on alto saxophone at the Rose Theater.

JAZZ REVIEW

Hark! The Heralded Jazzmen Swing Some Familiar Melodies

By BEN RATLIFF

Somewhere between ritual and remnant lies the jazz Christmas concert. As a manifestation of pure secular middle-class civility, it represents a vague and probably disappearing middle ground, even in Manhattan.

But there were enough occupants of this middle ground, some bringing children, to nearly fill the Rose Theater on Thursday night for Jazz at Lincoln Center's "Red Hot Holiday Stomp," which runs through Sunday. Unlike "Suite for Human Nature," the seasonal story with a libretto and original music presented by Jazz at Lincoln Center at this time last year, the current show isn't a stretch. Wynton Marsalis and a nonet of

his closest sidemen — some of them no longer members of the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra, but still on call for situations like this — played jazz arrangements of well-known Christmas songs like "Carol of the Bells," "Good King Wenceslas," "Blue Christmas" and so on.

If you've heard Mr. Marsalis's record "Crescent City Christmas Card," from which several of the songs derived, you've got the idea. But even without that, you may know the general vibe of a Wynton Marsalis show — tight arrangements, collective improvising in the styles of old New Orleans and Miles Davis's 1960's quintet, and between-songs speeches in the style of Bill Cosby, but one level shaggier. Too subdued to be a kids' show, the whole concert was like a bedtime story for adults. (One hopes things get a little rowdier for the Sunday matinee.)

Sleek, cheery and organized, the show was no knockout, but it still validated its

Red Hot Holiday Stomp

Rose Theater

own purpose, perhaps because most of these musicians were so comfortable playing together. The returning ex-orchestra members were the trombonist Wycliffe Gordon, the bassist Reginald Veal and the drummer Herlin Riley; the saxophonists were the current members Victor Goines, Wessell Anderson and Joe Temperley. Don Vappie, the New Orleans guitarist, banjoist and singer, strummed along and delivered some scratchy, unamplified solos. The pianist was Dan Nimmer, who has recently been playing with the orchestra. (Mr. Marsalis's father, Ellis, played piano on several songs.)

Mr. Gordon's calibrated roar often snaps a concert into focus, but on Thursday he sounded subdued. So the best moments came from Mr. Marsalis, Mr. Riley and es-

pecially young Mr. Nimmer, the only one with something to prove: he dug in, splintering his patterns, as if this weren't just a walk around the block. "Good King Wenceslas," especially, was no joke: its middle section became a game of fitting the staccato melody into fluid up-tempo swing. And as the musicians improvised together, those melody notes became diffused, spreading around like an unruly canon.

That happened in the second half, when the feeling of formality finally dissipated. Mr. Temperley's evocation of swing-era tenor saxophone happened, too, on a version of "The Christmas Song," as did a four-handed version of "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town" played by Ellis Marsalis and Mr. Nimmer. With "O Tannenbaum," Mr. Riley and the rest of the band made the song's New Orleans connection: it's the same melody as "Maryland, My Maryland," a long-running New Orleans march. It was beautifully played.